

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 3

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to recognize Ed Benson on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize, particularly on the occasion of their retirement, those estimable citizens who have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding individual is Ed Benson who, having served with distinction throughout his twenty-nine-year tenure with the Country Music Association, began a much deserved retirement from his post in September of 2008; and

WHEREAS, having served the Country Music Association (CMA) as associate executive director from 1979 to 1991, executive director from 1992 to 2005, and chief strategic officer from 2006 until his retirement, Mr. Benson has been an integral player in the unprecedented growth of the country music industry; and

WHEREAS, a native Nashvillian, Ed Benson is a graduate of Vanderbilt University; after three years of service in the U.S. Army, including serving in Vietnam, he began his business career in 1970 at The Benson Company, which was founded by his grandfather, John T. Benson, more than a century ago; and

WHEREAS, The Benson Company was Nashville's first music publishing company and was later a leader in the Christian and gospel music market; and

WHEREAS, Ed Benson joined the Country Music Association in 1979, and his list of achievements are many; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Benson participated in over 100 Board of Director's meetings on three continents, presided over countless award presentations, tributes, and honors, and oversaw the CMA Awards as they became one of the top televised awards shows, ranking alongside the Grammys and the Academy Awards; and

WHEREAS, he shepherded the move of Fan Fair from the State Fairgrounds to downtown Nashville, thereby increasing attendance and turning the festival into a world-class entertainment event; and

WHEREAS, Ed Benson led the initiative to broadcast the CMA Music Festival on network television as a concert special and recognized and capitalized on the huge benefits corporate sponsorship could bring to the country music industry; and

WHEREAS, an instrumental actor in bringing the CMA Awards to New York City in 2005, he also oversaw the purchase and construction of the new CMA headquarters; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Benson, an active and important part of his community and profession, was named a 2005 Tennessean of the Year by *The Tennessean* editorial board for his leadership in the growth of country music and bringing the CMA Awards to New York City that year; and

WHEREAS, participating in numerous worthy organizations, Ed Benson serves on the boards of the Tennessee Repertory Theater, Centennial Medical Center, Leadership Music, and The Crescendo Community Fund, as well as the Advisory Council of the Nashville Alliance for Public Education; and

WHEREAS, his many professional accomplishments aside, Mr. Benson is fortunate to share both love and companionship with his wife, Jamie, and they reside in Oak Hill; and

WHEREAS, although he has retired from his post at the Country Music Association, Mr. Benson maintains a busy schedule, bringing nearly four decades of experience to bear on his current work as a consultant and executive coach in organizational dynamics and workplace environment; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Ed Benson has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues in the country music industry, the good people of Tennessee, and music fans the world over; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Ed Benson for his exceptional service to

Tennessee, salute his professional expertise and personal excellence, and extend to him our warmest wishes for every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.